FFMR Testing Thoughts for PM's

Organization and Execution

This testing is critical to system deployment.

It will probably take longer to plan and organize than your usual system test.

If you currently have a thorough system test, execution and validation time should be shorter.

Incorporation into a current system test will probably save overall time but will require more up front analysis time, determining how the FFMR relate to the business requirements and fit into the overall test.

To make the most efficient use of testers time be sure they have the requisite tools- Test Director and TOAD are two good starting points.

Be sure your test framework encompasses all the system activities it needs to address all applicable FFMR. To review the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program (JFMIP) framework for possible adoption and/or adaptation see Chapter 2 of the following link:

http://www.jfmip.gov/jfmip/download/soft_qual_test_2002/test_plan_2002.pdf

Creating scenarios and scripts for FFMR testing is an iterative process.

Be sure to include a sufficient number of restart/recovery points in your testing framework so that huge sections of the test do not have to be rerun when something goes wrong.

FFMR testing requires a dedicated platform that can be restored to the original starting point or restart points as needed.

A planned methodical approach that does not attempt to skip steps will get desired results faster than trying to shortcut procedure.

Keep scripts to the same approximate size so that metrics based on scripts have some meaning.

Keep tight control on changes lest you create chaos and lose control totally.

For those of you, working with COTS packages the material from Software Engineering Institute (SEI) at the following link will provide useful insights to the whole COTS process. Suggest you download and read. Be sure to read the Foreword as well.

http://www.sei.cmu.edu/publications/documents/99.reports/lrb/little-red-book.html

Staffing

For the most efficient planning organization the best approach is cross-functional teams composed of some who understand the business requirements and others the technical operation.

Use your best people to minimize effort and maximize results. Good organizational skills are critical.

Burning out staff will result in longer time frames as they make more mistakes than they solve problems.

Make sure schedules are realistic and not the result of political decisions. Let experienced testers guide this determination.

Let staff focus their efforts by not assigning too many tasks at one time. Every time someone must change focus, they lose time and understanding.

Understand that testing is not a rote activity but, to be good at it, an exceptionally creative one, choose and treat test staff accordingly.

Be chary about assigning administrative and tracking tasks. Trying to see things from too many viewpoints consumes test staff time in non-productive ways.